01516

1975/04/30

MEMORANDUM

2839

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

URGENT ACTION

~~SECRET~~

April 30, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM: WILLIAM E. STEARMAN

SUBJECT: Sea Rescue of Vietnamese

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

U.S. vessels engaged in rescue operations off the coast of South Vietnam have been ordered to stand out to sea as the result of hostile fire in the Vung Tau area. We need a quick decision on whether or not U.S. Military Sea Command vessels should continue picking up escaping Vietnamese at sea.

This morning (our time) we received reports that a "Vietnamese" vessel (not further identified) fired on an MSC ship 10 to 15 miles south of Vung Tau and that another U.S. ship rescuing escapees from Vung Tau had been fired upon by shore batteries. No hits or injuries were reported. As a result, CINCPAC ordered U.S. ships in the area to stand out to sea. We have no word that they have been ordered to leave the general area, but such an order may follow.

Admiral Weschler at Defense (who is working with Dean Brown's group) tells me there are 8 MSC ships and up to 40 U.S. Navy ships available in the general area off the South Vietnamese coast to pick up escapees.

According to a recent CINCPAC message (date-time 300026Z) we have already rescued some 20,000 people at sea. Undoubtedly many more will attempt to escape by water. If we want to make a serious effort to continuing rescuing Vietnamese at sea, we should position U.S. vessels at the mouths of the major rivers flowing to sea from MRs III and IV.

General Brown told me at the last WSAG that U.S. ships have been ordered to remain over the horizon from the coast so that they could not be seen from shore and encourage people to try to escape to them. If we are serious about helping escapees, these ships should be no more

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By KBH, NARA, Date 2/10/00

Declassified
Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

than hull down (i. e. superstructure showing) from points at the mouths of major rivers but should be at least 3 miles off the coast. Captains should be ordered to withdraw to safe distances if their ships come under fire.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you call General Wickham and ask him to instruct CINCPAC to continue sea rescue operations at the mouths of principal MR III and IV rivers, no closer than 3 miles from the coast, but, if possible, visible at points along the sea end of the river mouths. Captains are not to endanger their ships in this operation and are to withdraw if fired upon.

APPROVE _____ DISAPPROVE _____

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

Dick Smyser concurs.

Declassified
Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

CORRESPONDENCE PROFILE

DOC		RECD			NBR	INITIAL ACTION O
MO	DA	MO	DA	HR		
4	30	4	30		7502839	

Kissinger

TO: PRES _____ FROM: ~~KISSINGER, H~~ _____

KISSINGER _____ COLBY, W _____

SCOWCROFT + SCHLESINGER _____

DAVIS _____ ST EX SEC _____

REFERENCE:

S/S _____

OTHER _____

CIRCLE AS APPROPRIATE

UNCLAS LOG IN/OUT

LOU NO FORN NODIS

C EYES ONLY EXDIS

S CODEWORD

TS SENSITIVE

SUBJECT: Sea Rescue of Vietnamese

INTERNAL ROUTING AND DISTRIBUTION	ACTION	INFO	REC CY FOR
ADVANCE CYS TO HAK/SCOWCROFT			
STAFF SECRETARY			
FAR EAST			
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA			
MID EAST / NO. AFRICA / SO. ASIA			
EUROPE / CANADA			
LATIN AMERICA			
UNITED NATIONS			
ECONOMIC			
SCIENTIFIC			
PROGRAM ANALYSIS			
NSC PLANNING			
CONGRESSIONAL			
OCEANS POLICY			
INTELLIGENCE			

ACTION REQUIRED

MEMO FOR HAK . . . . . ( )

MEMO FOR PRES . . . . . ( )

REPLY FOR _____ ( )

APPROPRIATE ACTION . . . . . ( )

MEMO _____ TO _____ . . . . . ( )

RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . . ( )

JOINT MEMO . . . . . ( )

REFER TO _____ FOR: _____ ( )

ANY ACTION NECESSARY? . . . . . ( )

CONCURRENCE . . . . . ( )

DUE DATE:

COMMENTS: (INCLUDING SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS)

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

DATE	FROM	TO	S	SUBSEQUENT ACTION REQUIRED (OR TAKEN):	CY TO
4/30		Scowcroft	x	Kissinger (5-1)	
5/2		NSC/S		OBE	

DISPATCH _____

CY RQMTS: SEE ABOVE PLUS: _____

NOTIFY _____ & DATE _____ BY _____

SPECIAL DISPOSITION: _____

CROSS REF W/ _____

SUSPENSE CY ATTACHED: X FOLDER: _____

MICROFILM & FILE RQMTS:

M/F'D _____ BY _____

CRT UD: 1975

OPEN _____

CLOSE GAB

SA SF HP NS WH EP PA DY

(NBC-74-21) 533-147

Declassified
Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library